



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 10, 2008

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House Bill 5863 - An Act Concerning An Umbilical Cord Blood Bank for Connecticut Residents

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 5863. It is important to note neither the enacted state budget nor the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Public Health includes funding for this initiative.

Public Act 06-77 (the Act) established an ad hoc committee (the Committee) to examine and evaluate the feasibility of (1) establishing a public umbilical cord blood bank for the purpose of collecting and storing umbilical cord blood and placental tissue donated by maternity patients at hospitals licensed in this state, (2) entering into a multi-state public umbilical cord collaboration, and (3) developing a public-private partnership with existing umbilical cord blood banks.

Per the Act, the Commissioner of the State Department of Public Health convened the inaugural meeting of the Committee on July 18, 2006. The Committee studied cord blood banking operations in detail, including the critical components of public education, collecting cord blood units (CBU), processing and storage, and the sale of cord blood units. In its January 5, 2007 Report to the General Assembly, the Committee recommended that Connecticut develop viable public umbilical cord blood banking options, and recommended that the most advantageous approach to providing for collection of cord blood within the state is through a public-private partnership between the state and a public cord blood bank that is willing to establish public collection operations within Connecticut.

In response to the January 5, 2007 report and recommendations of the Committee, the General Assembly mandated in Section 77 of Public Act 07-252 that on or before October 1, 2007, the Commissioner of Public Health shall request information from one or more umbilical cord blood banks concerning the establishment of a public cord blood collection operation within this state. On August 15, 2007, the Department issued a Request for Information (RFI) for establishing a public umbilical cord blood operation. Four current cord blood banks responded to the RFI expressing their interest in partnering with the State of Connecticut on the development of a public cord blood bank.

Section B of House Bill 5863 does not preclude a contracting public umbilical cord blood bank from requesting an investment from the state, and includes language regarding a contractual provision requiring the bank to distribute to the state a proportionate amount of funds generated from the sale of cord blood units. However, the most significant, unanswered questions are the extent to which the State would need to provide start up or on-going financial support to ensure the success of this effort, and the extent to which the state investment would be fully or partially recovered through the sale of cord blood units.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.



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